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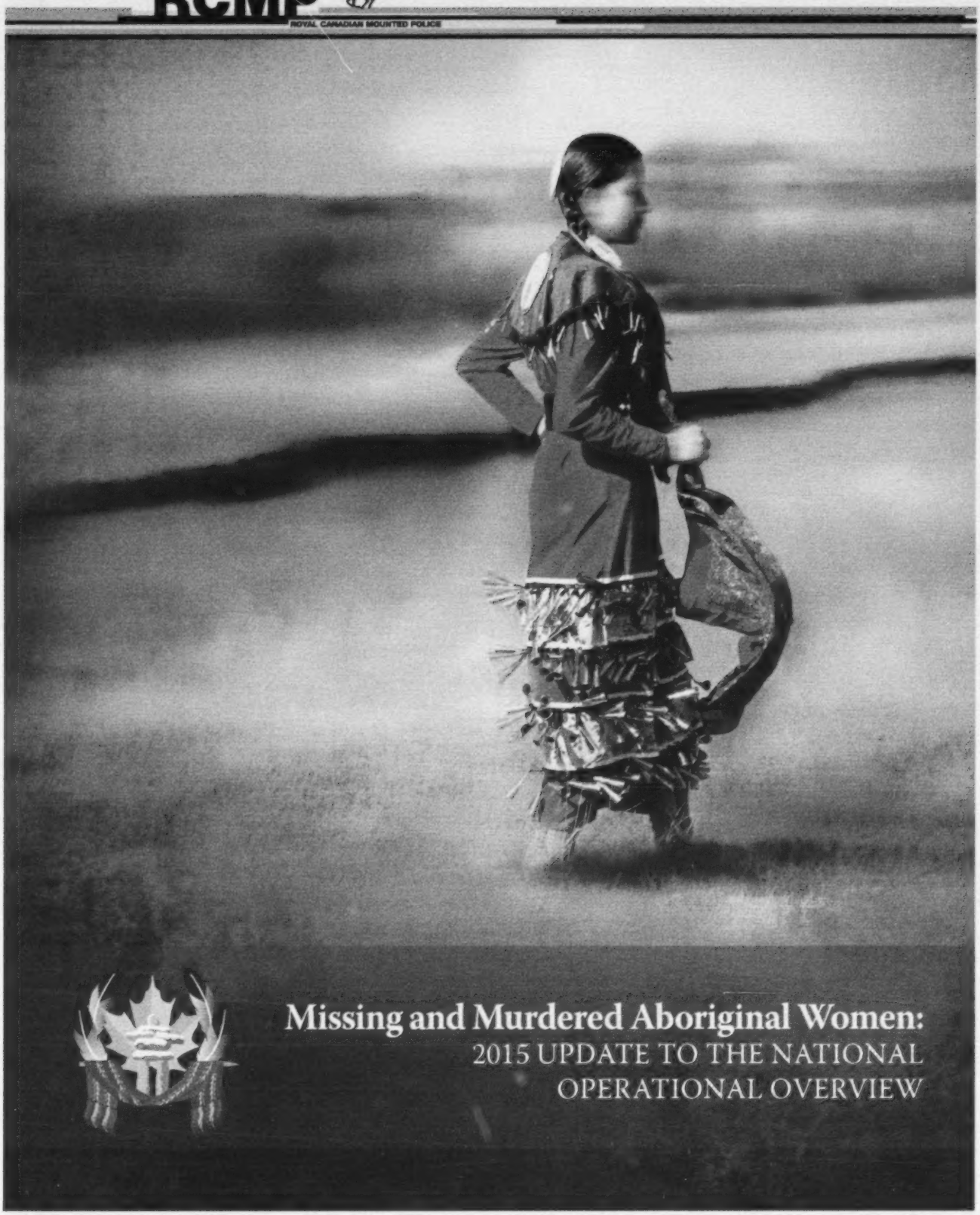

Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women:
2015 UPDATE TO THE NATIONAL OPERATIONAL OVERVIEW

Royal Canadian Mounted Police | Gendarmerie royale du Canada

Canada

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Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women: A National Operational Overview

Executive summary

In May 2014, the RCMP released *Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women: A National Operational Overview*. The 2015 report[1] provides updated statistics and analysis on new cases of missing and murdered Aboriginal women that have occurred since then, and addresses the investigative, procedural and preventative strides that the RCMP has taken in meeting the "Next Steps" outlined in the 2014 Overview.

Some of the key findings in this update include the following:

- There was a 9.3% reduction in the number of unsolved Aboriginal female homicides and "suspicious" missing person cases from the 2014 Overview (225 cases to 204 cases) across all police jurisdictions.
- In 2013 and 2014[2], within RCMP jurisdictions only[3], there were 32 Aboriginal female homicide cases. The proportion of Aboriginal female homicide victims within RCMP jurisdictions in 2013 and 2014 is consistent with levels of the past decade.
- The overall solve rate for female homicides in RCMP jurisdictions for 2013 and 2014 was 82%. Homicides of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women had similar solve rates of 81% and 83%.
- RCMP homicide data from 2013 and 2014 shows a strong nexus to family violence. Female victims, regardless of ethnicity, are most frequently killed by men within their own homes and communities.
- As of April 2015, for all police jurisdictions in Canada, there were 174 missing Aboriginal female cases. This represents 10% of the 1,750 missing females reported on the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC).
- Eleven additional Aboriginal women have gone missing since the 2014 Overview was conducted.

Parallel to the findings of the 2014 Overview in which most homicide victims had a previous relationship with the offender, the 2013 and 2014 RCMP data reveals that the offender was known to the victim in 100% of the solved homicides of Aboriginal women in RCMP jurisdiction, and in 93% of cases of solved homicides of non-Aboriginal women. Violence within family relationships is a key factor in homicides of women, and has prompted the RCMP to focus intervention and prevention efforts on familial and spousal violence.

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1 This report needs to be caveated with a certain amount of error and imprecision for a few reasons: Collection by investigators means data is susceptible to human error and interpretation, and multiple data sources (with different purposes, collection methodologies, and definitions) were used in the research. The numbers that follow are the best available data to which the RCMP had access to at the time the information was collected.

2 The 2014 Overview included homicide data covering 1980-2012.

3 Since the RCMP does not collect and report homicide data for the over 300 non-RCMP police agencies who each gave individual consent to use their data for the 2014 Overview, this update reflects RCMP data only.

The RCMP remains committed to ensuring the reduction and prevention of violence against Aboriginal women. However, the RCMP is only one partner among many government and non-government organizations (NGOs), social service agencies, health professionals and citizens who must align their efforts to reduce the high rates of violent victimization experienced by Aboriginal women.

Violence in our communities is a societal concern for Canada that goes beyond the responsibility of law enforcement, government and social services. While the safety of Canada's citizens, particularly the most vulnerable, is everyone's responsibility, communities play a vital role in developing and leading solutions. Aboriginal communities need to be included in working partnerships that will collectively focus on how best to approach challenges and find solutions that will enhance the safety and security of everyone.

Since the release of the 2014 Overview, there has been significant advancement of public understanding and awareness of the issue of violence against Aboriginal women. However, this update shows that Aboriginal women continue to be over-represented among Canada's murdered and missing women.

It is our hope that this report will continue to raise public awareness and encourage new prevention efforts. Through this update we take one more step forward in a difficult but necessary journey towards healing for all Canadians.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	03
Part 1 – Evolution of the 2014 National Operational Overview Data	06
Part 2 – Additional Analysis: 2014 National Operational Overview Data	08
Part 3 – RCMP Progress on "Next Steps" Outlined in the 2014 National Operational Overview	10
Part 4 – Statistical Analysis of New Data: Missing and Murdered Cases	12
Conclusion	15
Appendix: RCMP's *National Missing Persons Strategy*	16

Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women: 2015 Update to the National Operational Overview

Introduction

In May 2014, the RCMP released its *Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women: A National Operational Overview*. This was the first initiative of its kind to draw on data from all police jurisdictions across Canada[4]. It included data about reported missing Aboriginal women cases dating back to 1951, and reported homicides of Aboriginal women over a 33 year period, (1980-2012). The 2014 National Operational Overview has contributed to the dialogue on this important subject and public response has been significant.

This update should be read in conjunction with the 2014 National Operational Overview as the background and contextualization of the issue of violence against Aboriginal women[5] is discussed in greater detail in that document.

PART 1 – Evolution of the 2014 National Operational Overview Data

The 2014 National Operational Overview reported 120 unsolved homicides of Aboriginal women, and 105 missing Aboriginal women categorized as missing in "unknown" circumstances or where foul play was suspected, for a total of 225 unsolved missing and murdered cases across all police jurisdictions in Canada. Current updated data shows 106 unsolved homicide cases and 98 unsolved missing cases (unknown or foul play suspected circumstances) remain outstanding. The reduction from 225 unsolved cases to 204 this past year represents an overall resolution rate of 9.3%: 11.7% for homicides and 6.7% for missing Aboriginal females.

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4 The full report is available at: http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/pubs/mmaw-faapd-eng.pdf

5 This report, like the 2014 National Operational Overview, uses the terms "woman/women" and "female/females." For the purposes of this document these terms refer to "females" of all ages.

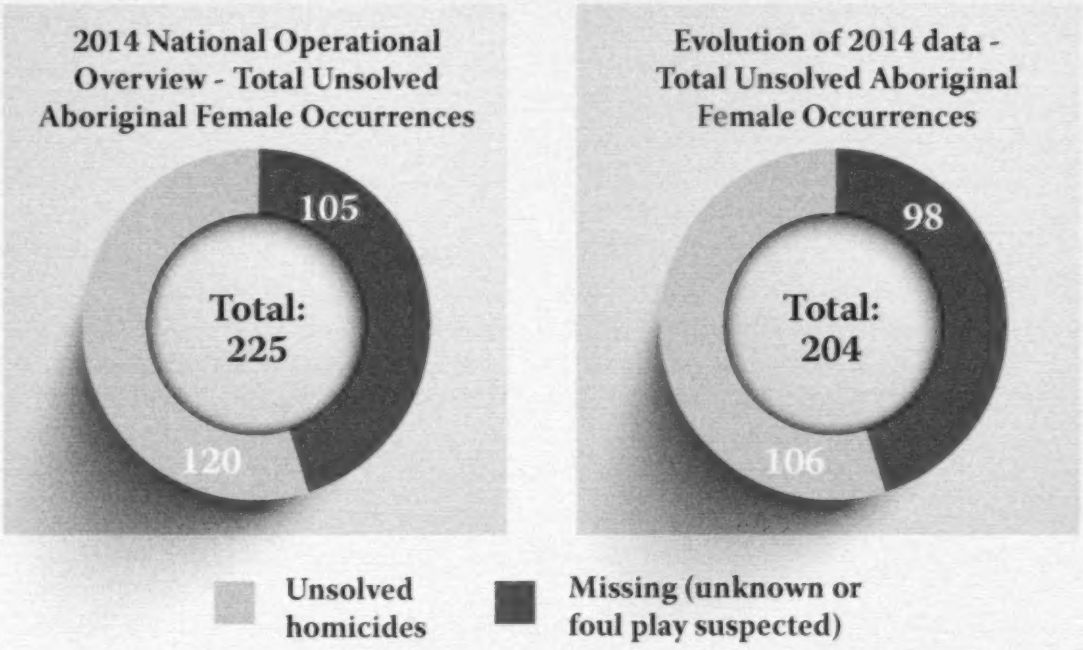


Figure 1: Comparison: Total Unsolved[6] Aboriginal Female Missing and Murdered Occurrences – 2014 National Operational Overview and Evolution of 2014 Data

The following represents the details of the evolution of the data related to these 225 unsolved cases:

- Six Aboriginal women reported missing have been "located." It is important to note that "located" in the case of missing persons can mean that the person has been found alive, or that found human remains or partial human remains have been identified as the missing person. When human remains/partial remains have been identified, an investigation continues to determine cause of death.
- As the result of investigation, one unsolved missing person case has become an active homicide investigation.
- Formal charges have been laid in 10 homicide cases.
- Two homicide cases have been concluded without charges as DNA identified suspects who are no longer alive.
- Three homicide cases are no longer classified as homicides as investigation has confirmed that the deaths were due to other causes, (i.e. accidental death, overdose, suicide).

6 Unsolved homicides from 1980-2012 and "unknown" circumstances/foul play suspected as the probable cause of Aboriginal women missing for at least 30 days.

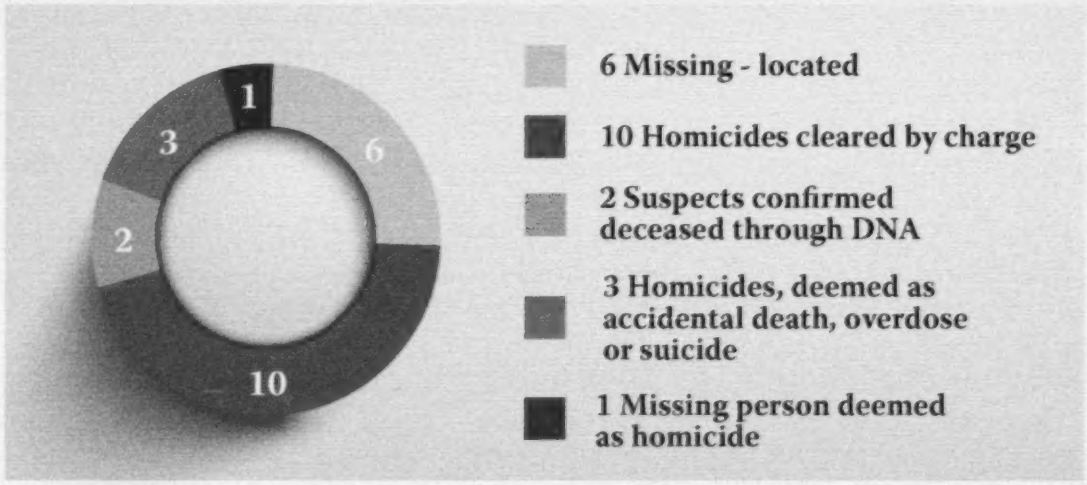


Figure 2: Evolution in 2014 Data – Unsolved Missing and MurderedAboriginal Females[7]

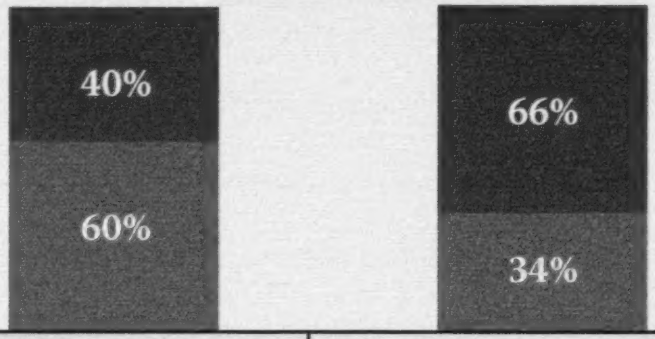
PART 2 - Additional Analysis: 2014 Operational Overview Homicide Data

Some additional analysis was conducted on the 1980-2012 data of female homicides, particularly as it related to the locations of the homicides of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women. Since 1991, Statistics Canada has collected data on homicides occurring in Census Metropolitan Areas[8] (CMAs). When analyzed, there was a notable difference between homicides of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women from 1991-2012[9] in terms of whether or not the incident occurred within or outside a CMA. Homicides of Aboriginal women were more likely to occur outside the boundaries of a CMA (60%) than homicides of non-Aboriginal women (34%), as demonstrated in the following chart:

7 Note: This figure reflects 22 "changes" to the unsolved missing and murdered Aboriginal female cases reported in the 2014 Overview. However, a reduction from 225 to 204 is only a change of 21. This is due to one missing case that has been re-categorized a homicide case. While the case is no longer counted as missing, it is counted as a murder and the overall combined total is not affected by this change.

8 Statistics Canada defines a CMA as an "area consisting of one or more neighbouring municipalities situated around a core. A Census Metropolitan Area must have a total population of at least 100,000, of which 50,000 or more live in the core." (http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/ref/dict/geo009-eng.cfm)

9 For clarity – CMA data was not available before 1991.



	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
CMA	279	2155
Non CMA	426	1129

Figure 3: CMA Versus Non-CMA for Female Homicides, 1991-2012

Looking more deeply into the data, analysis has shown that female homicides most often occurred within a residence. This was the case in 68% of homicides of Aboriginal women and 77% of homicides of non-Aboriginal women reported between 1991 and 2012. More specifically, female homicides often occurred in a home that was jointly shared by the victim and the offender. This was the case for 44% of Aboriginal women and 51% of non-Aboriginal women.

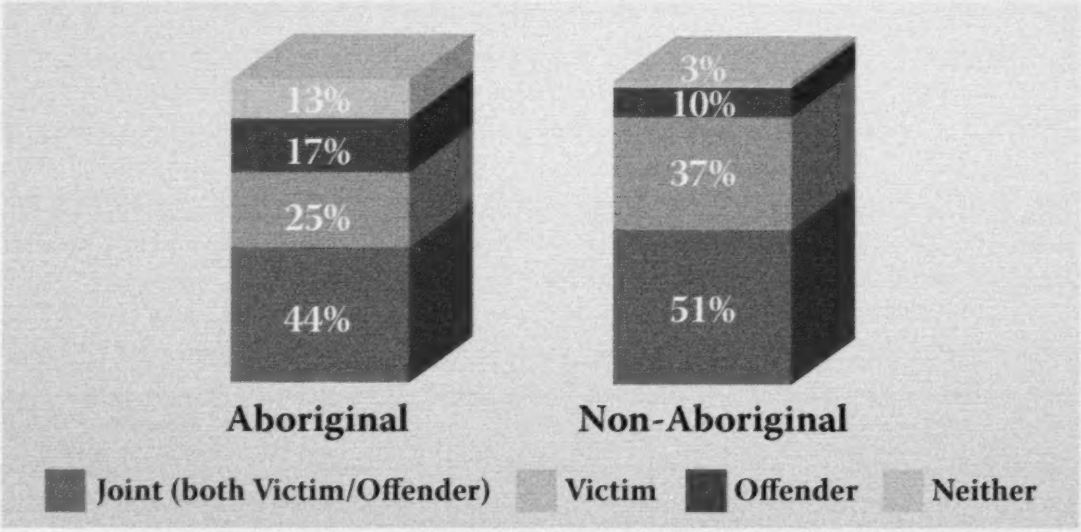


Figure 4: Female Residential Homicides, by Occupancy of the Home, 1991-2012
Note: Due to "rounding" the percentages in each column do not add to 100%

PART 3 – RCMP Progress on "Next Steps" Outlined in the 2014 National Operational Overview

Enhancing Efforts on Unsolved Cases

The RCMP has reviewed all of the outstanding cases of missing and murdered Aboriginal women within its jurisdictions reported in the 2014 Overview, finding that investigations were being diligently investigated with appropriate investigative resourcing. The RCMP has provided all policing partners with data relative to cases in non-RCMP jurisdictions to assist in their reviews.

The RCMP's *National Missing Persons Strategy* was introduced on September 5, 2014. This Strategy is based on recognized practices in the investigation of missing persons cases. The strategy has augmented investigative review standards and tools reinforcing the importance of increased supervision. Furthermore, the strategy has standardized the investigative process with a revised *Missing Persons Policy* which incorporates investigative best practices and directives for referrals to Victim Services, taking into consideration cultural needs and establishing mandatory communication schedules with families.

Focusing Prevention Efforts

RCMP homicide data from 2013 and 2014 shows a strong nexus to spousal violence, which points to the need to target prevention efforts towards violence in family relationships as a critical element in reducing homicides of women. Female victims, regardless of their ethnicity, are most frequently killed by men within their own homes and communities. Accordingly, the RCMP has focused prevention efforts on familial and spousal violence.

The RCMP has identified vulnerable Aboriginal communities across Canada in which to focus prevention and intervention activities aimed at reducing the high incidence of violence against women. RCMP managers have been provided with tools to work with these vulnerable communities to develop and deliver violence prevention initiatives (i.e facilitating access to available funding and established successful programs). Federal and provincial governmental departments and Aboriginal organizations have also been engaged to support the delivery of programming to the vulnerable communities.

RCMP Detachment Commanders, in consultation with local community leaders, are required to develop action plans for the implementation of prevention/intervention activities. Analysis of the implementation, progress and success of the action plans and prevention activities will be done in order to gauge success. Successful plans and interventions will be shared for implementation in other interested communities.

Through the RCMP's Family Violence Initiative (FVI), funding has been allocated and distributed in 2014-2015 in support of violence prevention/intervention initiatives in Aboriginal communities. Over 75% of this funding allocation has been distributed to communities where the RCMP is focusing its prevention initiatives. Distribution of FVI funds will continue throughout fiscal years 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 with a focus on Aboriginal communities.

In addition to the above noted locally developed initiatives, the RCMP is promoting the

implementation of established prevention programs in Aboriginal communities. For example, the Aboriginal Shield program, a youth empowerment program which encourages making informed, healthy and positive choices, is available for delivery in communities.

Increasing Public Awareness

The RCMP continues to maintain a dedicated liaison with the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC). This relationship allows for the sharing of information between the two organizations, to draw attention to issues of concern to Aboriginal women and communities as well as to work collaboratively to develop initiatives.

As a tool to raise awareness of the issues facing Aboriginal women, the RCMP, in partnership with NWAC and the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), created a poster campaign targeting the reduction of family violence, the timely reporting of missing persons cases and the importance of reporting all details/tips in missing persons investigations. These posters were distributed nationally to increase public engagement[10].

More recently, the RCMP produced a Public Service Announcement[11] (PSA) video featuring Canadian singer Shania Twain on the issue of family violence. In the fall of 2015, the RCMP will release a second PSA featuring Canadian Inuk National Hockey League player Jordin Tootoo. The video message is designed to raise awareness, particularly among Aboriginal men and boys, about the issue of violence against women. Ultimately, efforts like these aim to stop the generational cycle of violence.

Through involvement in the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police committees and in consultation with Statistics Canada, the RCMP is engaged in ongoing efforts to encourage lawful and appropriate releases of data on the issue of violence against Aboriginal women and to keep this issue in the public consciousness to encourage prevention efforts. In 2014, the RCMP ensured that all relevant national data collected for the 2014 Overview as a result of follow up with the Canadian policing community was submitted to Statistics Canada as part of its official holdings.

Strengthening the Data

The National Centre for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains (NCMPUR) provides national data sharing, analytical support, liaison and coordination and development of investigational best practices in missing persons and unidentified remains cases. NCMPUR is administered by the RCMP, but serves all Canadian police services. Investigators, in consultation with victim's families, determine whether to publish missing person data on *Canada's Missing* website (www.canadasmissing.ca). There may be family or investigational reasons for determining that a profile should not be published. Missing persons/unidentified remains profiles published on the website are publically available. Tips received from the public can assist in resolving missing person cases.

As part of the commitments made in the 2014 Overview, the RCMP provided the project data on missing Aboriginal females to NCMPUR to be considered for publication on the website. To date,

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10 For details of the awareness campaign or to view the posters visit: http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/news-nouvelles/2014/08-06-posters-affiches-eng.htm

11 View at http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/cp-pc/twain-psa-mip-eng.htm

150 files of the 164 outstanding Aboriginal female missing cases have either been published, the publication is pending, it has been excluded from publication for family/investigative reasons, or it has been removed from CPIC as the case is no longer an outstanding missing person.

The RCMP continues to update, compile and distribute homicide and missing persons statistics on cases within its jurisdictions to ensure reliable and relevant data is available for operational decision-making. The RCMP's *Missing Persons Policy*, related forms/reports and supervisory requirements have been amended to ensure consistent collection of relevant information for statistical purposes. The Homicide Survey collected by Statistics Canada has been enhanced to ensure more reliable data on the Aboriginal origin of victims and, when applicable, charged suspects, is gathered.

PART 4 – Statistical Analysis of New Data: Missing and Murdered Cases

Missing

The following data on missing Aboriginal women is based on a CPIC search conducted on April 1, 2015 for all non-white females missing for at least 30 days across **all police jurisdictions**[12]. A quality assurance review using the NCMPUR database was also conducted. These searches resulted in 159 additional missing non-white female cases being identified for review. Nineteen of these 159 new files were determined to be missing Aboriginal females.

It is important to note that 11 of the 19 missing Aboriginal women actually went missing since the 2014 Overview[13]. The remaining eight cases were captured in the updated data set as a result of file reviews of these historical cases. The reasons for the lack of inclusion in the 2014 Overview are attributable to Aboriginal origin not originally captured, files not previously reported or files not current on CPIC.

The probable cause[14] of the disappearance was noted for the additional cases. Of the 19 cases, 13 were categorized as "unknown" or foul play suspected, whereas six were considered to be runaway or lost/wandered off. The 13 additional cases combined with the 98 previous unsolved suspicious cases from the 2014 Overview bring the number of unsolved missing Aboriginal female cases in Canada across all police jurisdictions to 111. By way of comparison, in 2014 it was reported that there were 164 missing Aboriginal women out of a total population of all missing females of 1,455. Since the Overview, the RCMP has found that 155 of these cases remain outstanding on CPIC. The 19 female Aboriginal

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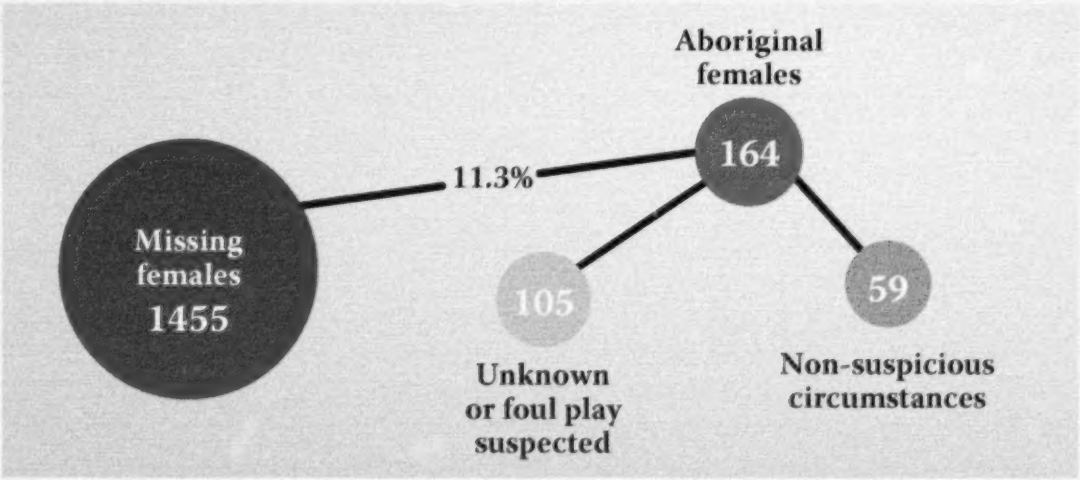
12 The April 1, 2015 dataset was gathered upon the same criteria as the November 4, 2013 data collection used for the 2014 Overview: female, non-white or blank race, missing for at least 30 days as of the date of the search.

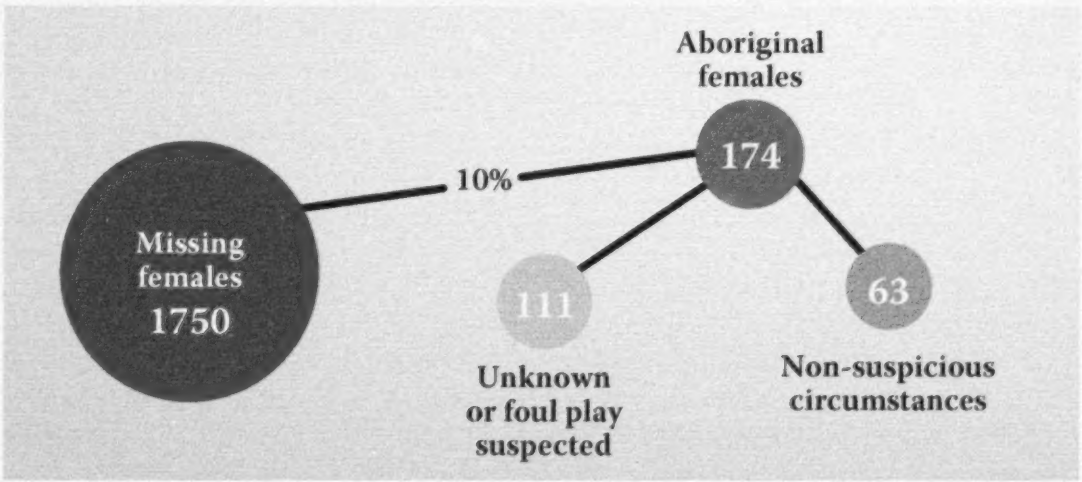
13 Between November 4, 2013 and April 1, 2015.

14 Definitions of the "probable cause" of a disappearance are established by CPIC and laid out in detail in the 2014 National Operational Overview. The possibilities are: abduction by a stranger, accident, wandered off/lost, parental abduction with a custody order, parental abduction – no custody order, runaway, unknown and other. An additional category of foul play suspected was utilized by researchers to consolidate all categories of suspected violence. The same probable causes for the disappearance are utilized in this update.



Methodological note: In this research, "missing" means those women who were recorded on CPIC as missing for more than 30 days as of November 4, 2013.

Figure 5: 2014 National Operational Overview – Summary of Missing Aboriginal Females Across all Police Jurisdictions in Canada



Methodological note: In this research, "missing" means those women who were recorded on CPIC as missing for more than 30 days as of April 1, 2015.

Figure 6: 2015 Update - Summary of Missing Aboriginal Females as of April 2015 Across all Police Jurisdictions in Canada

missing cases were added to those 155 that remained outstanding from the 2014 Overview, for a total of 174 Aboriginal females missing for at least 30 days as of April 1, 2015. This represents 10% of the total population of missing females of 1,750[15] recorded on CPIC in April 2015[16].

Murdered

The following data is for **RCMP jurisdictions only**. The RCMP does not collect and report homicide data for the over 300 non-RCMP police agencies who each gave individual consent to use their data for the 2014 Overview.

Analysis of 2013 and 2014 Female Homicides in all RCMP Jurisdictions in Canada

In 2013, there were 149 homicides in RCMP jurisdictions. Of these, 42 involved female victims[17], and 17 (40%) were identified by homicide investigators as Aboriginal females. In 2014, there were 151 homicides in RCMP jurisdiction. Of these, 43 involved female victims, and 15 (35%) were identified by homicide investigators as being Aboriginal females. The proportion of Aboriginal female homicide victims within RCMP jurisdictions in 2013 and 2014 is consistent with levels of the past decade. (The mean for the past decade is just over 37 percent, the same for 2013 and 2014.)

It is estimated that the RCMP polices over 40% of the Aboriginal population of Canada and approximately 20% of the overall Canadian population. These statistics would explain why, proportionally, the number of Aboriginal female homicides is higher for RCMP jurisdictions than for the average Canadian police jurisdiction[18].

The overall solve rate for female homicides occurring in RCMP jurisdictions for 2013 and 2014 was 82%. Homicides of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women had similar solve rates of 81% and 83%. A solve rate of 81% for homicides of Aboriginal women indicates that 26 of the 32 homicides recorded in 2013 and 2014 have been solved.

Relationships between the offender and victim for 2013 and 2014 showed a trend similar to that found in the 2014 Overview (1980-2012). Offenders were known to their victims in 100% of solved homicide cases of Aboriginal women and in 93% of solved homicide cases of non-Aboriginal women in RCMP jurisdictions in 2013 and 2014. Current and former spouses and family members made up the majority of relationships between victims and offenders, representing 73% of homicides of Aboriginal women and 77% of non-Aboriginal women in RCMP jurisdictions in 2013 and 2014.

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15 As of the time of the update, there were 1,750 missing females (white, non-white and blank race) across all jurisdictions, dating back to 1951.

16 Aboriginal women continue to be over-represented among Canada's missing and murdered women given their percentage of the Canadian population (4.3%).

17 In 2013 there were 147 female homicides across Canada: http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/legal10a-eng.htm. The 2014 data will not be released until Statistics Canada publishes the 2014 Juristat in December. Source: Statistics Canada, CANSIM, table 253-0003 and Homicide Survey, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics.

18 As reported in the 2014 Overview, between 1980 and 2012, Aboriginal female victims of homicide represented about 16% of all female homicides across Canada.

Conclusion

While serving as a stark portrait of a complex issue, the 2014 National Operational Overview provided the RCMP with the most comprehensive statistical analysis of police-reported incidents of missing and murdered Aboriginal women to date. It has helped to give the RCMP, and hopefully the public at large, better insight into this reality.

The updated data reflects that 9.3% of unsolved Aboriginal female homicide and missing persons cases captured in the 2014 Overview have since been resolved. In 2013 and 2014, 32 of 85 female murder victims in RCMP jurisdictions were Aboriginal – more than a quarter of the total number. Missing and murdered Aboriginal women continue to be overrepresented given their percentage of the Canadian population.

The update revealed the unmistakable connection homicides have to family violence. Most women, regardless of ethnicity, are being killed in their homes and communities by men known to them, be it a former or present spouse, or a family member. Prevention efforts must focus on stopping violence in family relationships to reduce homicides of women, and we are moving forward with many initiatives on this front.

As of April of this year, 174 Aboriginal women across all police jurisdictions remain missing, 111 of these under suspicious circumstances. These women are mothers, daughters, sisters, and friends, and we can never lose sight of that fact. The RCMP remains committed to solving these cases, and bringing closure and justice to the families who have also been victimized.

The RCMP, as one among many stakeholders, is committed to working in collaboration with Aboriginal communities, NGOs, social services, health professionals and governmental agencies to implement concrete initiatives that address the underlying root causes of the violence facing Aboriginal women, and to finding solutions to this tragic reality.

Violence in our communities is a societal concern for Canada that goes beyond the law enforcement community. Canadians have a shared responsibility to address the health and welfare of all citizens, especially those who are the most vulnerable to violent victimization. A collective focus on healthy familial relationships and community well-being, including health care, social services, child protection, education and the administration of justice is needed.

Public awareness and understanding are key to making this a reality. The RCMP is proud to play a role in this regard, and pledges its commitment to continue this important work.

Appendix:
RCMP's National Missing Persons Strategy

Our Vision

The RCMP will maintain the highest quality of missing person investigations, incorporating a multi-agency community response focused on prevention, and utilizing established best practices.

Overview

The RCMP defines a missing person as anyone reported to or by police as someone whose whereabouts are unknown, whatever the circumstances of the disappearance. The person will be considered missing until located.

Every year in Canada approximately 65,000 people are reported as missing to police. Canadian geography, cultural diversity, and multiple police jurisdictions are factors which complicate the investigation of reports of missing persons. Nevertheless, proactive measures have been taken to ensure that missing person investigations are pursued to the fullest possible extent. The RCMP has formed partnerships with other law enforcement agencies, provincial and territorial governments, nongovernmental organizations, and First Nation, Métis and Inuit organizations, both regionally and nationally.

The RCMP has or leads several task forces in western Canada dedicated to actively reviewing files with respect to missing women. In working collaboratively to address this important issue, the task forces have developed best practices for information sharing, file management, file coordination and disclosure that can be shared with other investigative units or implemented in similar initiatives across the country.

The incorporation of National Missing Children Services into the National Centre for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains (NCMPUR) resulted in the availability of specialized services to Canadian police agencies, medical examiners and chief coroners on a national level. Three significant NCMPUR deliverables include a national website for missing persons and unidentified remains which will provide NCMPUR clients with more comprehensive information on cases across jurisdictions, the creation of a best practices document developed in consultation with various police partner agencies, and the development of training to increase investigative effectiveness.

Senior RCMP officials have ensured that the issue of missing person investigations has been brought to the forefront as a priority in the organization. The subject of missing persons is a national standing item for the attention of provincial and territorial Criminal Operations Officers who ensure that investigative priorities are addressed by divisional investigative resources. Their support has been foundational to the development of this *National Missing Persons Strategy*.

In development of the *National Missing Persons Strategy* a comprehensive review of reports, policies and best practices has led to the following conclusions:

- Multi-dimensional, multi-agency responses are required.
- It is vital to focus on enhanced operational police response in concert with community awareness and engagement.
- Additional communication with stakeholders is required.
- Reporting myths and perceptions on missing persons investigations need to be dispelled.
- Families of missing persons need to be made aware of available victim services and community support.

Challenges

Although there have been significant advancements in the conduct of missing person investigations, the following challenges remain:

- Delays may result from jurisdictional confusion and myths related to reporting procedures.
- The definition of a "missing person" and reporting protocols may vary across police jurisdictions.
- Perception of lifestyle, behaviour and culture may hinder timely reporting and police action.
- The application of due diligence in missing person cases regardless of situational factors.
- Assigning the appropriate level of importance to and heightening awareness of missing person investigations.
- Families of missing persons may not be referred to Victim Services for support, as this service relies on the availability of provincial programming for missing persons cases.
- The dynamics of every missing person occurrence is unique which makes it difficult to conduct a standardized risk assessment, or to provide a standard response.
- Inaccurate media coverage can distract from police operations, heighten public anxiety, and negatively impact police rapport with families of the missing.

Strategic Goal

To provide a foundation for missing person investigations focusing on four key pillars:

- demonstrating accountability;
- entering partnerships;
- supporting families; and
- increasing awareness.

The RCMP will implement prevention measures and standardize an organizational approach to locating missing persons.

Strategic Approach

The RCMP approach will be to follow the four pillars which are key components of RCMP core policing activities. They will guide and support an effective, comprehensive and coordinated response to missing person investigations in RCMP jurisdictions.

Four Pillars:

- ✓ Demonstrating Accountability: Investigation / Intelligence
- ✓ Partnerships: Consultation and Integrated Service Delivery
- ✓ Supporting Families: Assistance and Communication
- ✓ Increasing Awareness: Prevention and Communication

Demonstrating Accountability:

The RCMP will provide strong leadership and supervision related to missing person investigations by:

- Incorporating established best practices into missing person investigations;
- Supporting investigative excellence by providing sound missing persons policy;
- Confirming policy compliance by RCMP employees through effective supervision;
- Considering enhancements to RCMP records management systems to capture all available missing person data.

Partnerships:

The RCMP will provide an integrated response to missing persons investigations by:

- Working with:
  - Other law enforcement agencies (locally, nationally and internationally);
  - Families of missing persons;
  - Provincial and Territorial governments, and non-government organizations (NGOs);
  - National Aboriginal organizations and cultural advocacy groups;
  - Communities (local groups and citizens);
  - Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP);
- Engaging all necessary resources in order to provide the most effective response;
- Integrating with other law enforcement agencies to further advance missing persons investigations;
- Seeking to obtain family cooperation at the earliest opportunity to support investigations;
- Identifying opportunities to work with government, NGOs and Aboriginal and cultural advocacy groups, to leverage their knowledge and maximize joint prevention efforts;
- Reducing the prevalence of missing persons through community collaboration; and
- Involving the community in response to missing person investigations.

Supporting Families:

The RCMP will continue to foster effective communication with families of missing persons throughout investigations by:

- Developing a schedule in consultation with the family/reporting party to provide investigative status updates;
- Informing the family/reporting party of available victim services and other relevant supporting agencies while being cognizant of the need for cultural sensitivity.

Increasing Awareness:

The RCMP will develop prevention strategies and enhance communication to resolve and reduce missing person occurrences by:

- Developing a national communication plan to support the missing persons strategy and highlighting established best practices and RCMP missing persons policy;
- Informing the public of reporting procedures related to missing persons occurrences to improve outcomes;
- Encouraging the development of and participation in collaborative prevention and intervention strategies with government agencies and NGOs;
- Undertaking prevention campaigns to heighten awareness of missing person issues among Canadian citizens (e.g., public service announcements [PSAs]; social media campaigns; posters; school talks; and community town halls).

The Strategy

The RCMP will introduce measures to reduce or eliminate challenges historically faced during missing persons investigations. The following measures will effectively enhance the quality of investigations:

IMMEDIATE IMPROVEMENTS:

- Update of RCMP National Missing Persons policy incorporating established best practices;
- Initiation of the development and use of a mandatory national missing person intake form;
- Implementation of a mandatory national risk assessment tool as an investigative aid;
- Ensuring that supervision and guidance is provided on all missing person investigations;
- Conduct of interviews with located individuals to identify risk factors to inform prevention and early intervention measures;
- Ensuring that available victim services are provided to support the families of missing persons;
- Provision of ongoing and timely communication to the families / reporting parties of missing persons.

Expected Outcome:

- RCMP national Missing Persons Policy will be published in 2014 and will include the above components to contribute to national standardization and professional consistency in the calibre of missing persons investigations conducted by the RCMP.

ENHANCED PRACTICES:

- Providing enhanced training for RCMP employees with respect to their respective roles as they relate to missing persons reports and investigations;
- Ensuring effective and accurate communication, internally and externally.

Expected Outcomes:

- NCMPUR will complete preparation of three on-line Level 1 investigators courses, in the areas of missing children, missing adults and unidentified remains in 2014;
- Three internal communications products will be developed and delivered by the end of fiscal year 2014-2015 (RCMP internal website content; a force-wide broadcast; a Commissioner's video message);
- A national social media campaign (YouTube; Facebook; Twitter) to be initiated in fiscal year 2014-2015;
- Development of a communications toolkit for use by divisions (PSAs; social media campaign; posters, school talks; and community town halls) with delivery in winter 2014-2015.

PROACTIVE MEASURES:

- Conduct a review of the operational files related to the recent report, *"Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women: A National Operational Overview"*, to identify vulnerability factors and next steps;
- Participate in the development and implementation of initiatives to reduce the incidence of missing persons;
- Create partnerships with key community stakeholders to enable information sharing and maximization of the effective use of resources;
- Consultation with experts, key stakeholders, and community and cultural groups to ensure that initiatives adequately and proactively address current issues and concerns with respect to missing persons.

Expected Outcomes:

- Review and revise the RCMP's *Missing Persons Policy* to ensure that it is current;
- Ensure periodic review of the RCMP's *Missing Persons Policy* to ensure that it remains current;
- In the course of business NCMPUR will identify and implement, or partner on the implementation of initiatives which provide investigators with specialized services to improve the quality of missing persons and unidentified remains investigations across Canada;
- National Crime Prevention Services will champion the *National Missing Persons Strategy* and maintain coordination of national initiatives implemented in its support;
- The RCMP will participate in the CACP working group on missing persons initiatives;
- RCMP divisional Crime Prevention Services units will disseminate missing persons toolkits to community groups.

Governance

Roles:

- National Champion / Executive Sponsor – Deputy Commissioner, Contract and Aboriginal Policing (CAP);
- Project Lead – National Aboriginal Policing and Crime Prevention Services (NAPCPS);

- Communications Lead – National Communications Services (NCS);
- Contributors – CAP National Criminal Operations (NCROPS); National Centre for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains (NCMPUR).

Reporting:

- Tracking and reporting of the elements of the strategy through CAP monitoring of a *National Missing Persons Strategy* Action Plan;
- Progress updates to RCMP Criminal Operations Officers through reports to the National Integrated Operations Council (NIOC);
- Progress updates to the top levels of senior RCMP leadership by reports, as required, to the Senior Executive Committee (SEC).